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CYPRUS

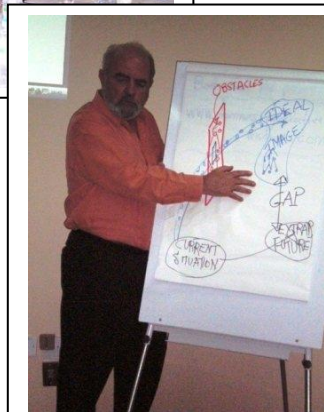
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Civil Society Organizations revitalize peace process through intercommunity dialogue

Although living on the same island, addressing the same problems, often using the same methods, civil society organizations from Cyprus' two communities rarely share ideas, experiences, or success stories. The Civil Society Dialogue Project aims to change this and revitalize the peace process by establishing a Citizen's Platform where ideas are discussed and action plans are devised to build a unified Cyprus. The project organized a Public Convention April 12th to share experiences of their events, trainings and workshops in the areas of peace revival, economic integration, Famagusta revival, and environment. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, experienced and young, involved in civil society or just generally interested, came together at this event to learn about one another and generate a vision of their common future.



*Cyprus' Civil
Society
organizations
from both sides of
the divide discuss
their common
future*



Building Environmental Bridges across the Divide

The UNDP-ACT supported Environmental Stakeholder Forum (CESF) celebrated its one year anniversary with an annual conference, "Working Together for our Common Environment." CESF is a bicomunal, multidisciplinary network of environmental stakeholders bringing together Cyprus' large, but fragmented environmental community to advocate on common environmental priorities.

*The endemic
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of which a little
over 3,000
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regularly
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the buffer zone.*



The forum emphasized the environment's importance as a peace-building tool. Some examples include protection of Cyprus' endangered species, improving the island's dairy sector, promoting organic farming, dialogue on pandemic preparedness, and civil society environmental advocacy. Although a symbol of division between the two communities, the Cyprus buffer zone, which covers nearly 3% of the island and is more than four miles wide in some places, can also serve as grounds for building cooperation and trust around environmental issues that are boundary-resistant.

*The mission of USAID/Cyprus is to
encourage cooperation between
Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot
individuals and organizations to
reduce tensions and promote a
climate that will foster reconciliation
and a durable peace settlement.*

SAVE

Building on the results of SAVE's pilot mulching program, which has demonstrated that mulching is an effective and economical alternative to burning and dumping, SAVE organized a mulching working group session in Lefka where stakeholders discussed next steps for raising awareness on the topic and broadening the pilot program. Work continues on the GIS/land use planning activities, including through mentored projects and continued training sessions. On April 16, the GIS team organized a field-data workshop for antiquities professionals. SAVE's launched the Turkish-version of its web site, which can be viewed at <http://save-irg.com/tr-index.php>. Work continues on the publications that will document preservation work at the Basilica of St. Auxevius at Soli (mosaics) and the Cathedral of St. Mamas in Morphou.

ACT

ACT held a three-day planning session to map the framework for the ACT extension period. During the workshop, UNDP-ACT staff, with the help of facilitators, developed a vision statement, key areas of focus, core principles and activities for the next 3 years of ACT. The Ledra Street opening "vodcast," created by ACT partners is now available on UNDP-ACT's website. The Cypriot Civil Society Strengthening Program wrapped up its 7-month training with the "Fundraising for Civil Society Organizations" course, held April 4-19. The final course was held in Greek in Agros and in Turkish in Nicosia. The Cypriot Puzzle Art Exhibition was kicked off on Friday, April 11 and will run through April 22nd in Limassol. The exhibit presents the 33 prize winners of the island wide Art Attack art competition of 2007.

EDGE

Businesspeople from both communities participated in three Business to Business (B2B) sessions which were facilitated by EDGE, and organized as part of the ACT-supported Cyprus Producers Network. The meetings, held on April 10th, 14th and 17th focused on the construction; papers, plastics and chemicals; and information and communication technology sectors, respectively. These meetings are laying the foundation not just for individual business deals across the dividing Green Line, but also for sustained business connections in critical sectors. The agriculture team continues its work with in alternative crops—finalizing orchard reports for the pilot pomegranate farmers and the arrangements for an upcoming study tour for cactus fruit producers. The banking team facilitated several meetings related to ongoing efforts by the US, UK, and EU to strengthen TC capacity to identify and combat money laundering.

REAP

With support from REAP, the Turkish Cypriot electricity utility is holding a customer relationship management course. The Energy Professionals Association (EPA) will collaborate with the Turkish Cypriot electricity experts and the trade union for an event on Earth Day later in the month. Following the EPA's website launch the organization signed up fourteen new members. EPA also now has a Facebook group where members can share news of upcoming events, photos of past events and network with other members of the group.



EDGE awarded certificates to the 13 participants of the 4-day "Customer Oriented Services" course as part of its ongoing training program for the banking sector, held April 14-17.

News from Nicosia

April 11

Mehmet Ali Talat becomes the first Turkish Cypriot leader since 1974 to cross the dividing Green Line at the newly opened checkpoint on Ledra Street. He visited many Greek Cypriot shops on the historic shopping street.

April 18

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations formally announced the formation of six working groups and seven technical committees as part of efforts to restart substantive negotiations to solve the Cyprus problem. The six working groups will focus on: governance and power-sharing, EU matters, security and guarantees, territory, property and economic matters. The seven technical committees will focus on: crime/criminal matters, economic and commercial matters, cultural heritage, crisis management, humanitarian matters, health and the environment.

OUR PROJECTS

- The **Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT)** program mainstreams the concepts of conflict resolution in over 120 projects that encourage Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to work on issues of common concern and solve problems together. Projects are currently underway in the areas of youth, education and tolerance, civil society strengthening, sustainable development and cultural heritage preservation. ACT is funded through a cooperative agreement between USAID and the UN Development Program (UNDP).
- The **Cyprus Partnership for Economic Growth (CyPEG)** includes activities that support economic growth in the Turkish Cypriot community to decrease the disparities between the communities and promote reconciliation. CyPEG is implemented by U.S. contractors under different USAID contract mechanisms.
 - The objective of the **Economic Development and Growth for Enterprises (EDGE)** project is to strengthen the domestic and international competitiveness of Turkish-Cypriot small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and help restructure the financial sector so that SMEs can thrive.
 - The **Resource Efficiency Achievement Program (REAP)** promotes more efficient use of water and energy by conducting audits and upgrades of representative business establishments and households. REAP also provides technical assistance to Turkish Cypriot energy experts.
 - The **Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (SAVE)** project focuses on improving (1) the competitiveness, financial status, and quality of basic services and infrastructure to more easily meet international and EU standards and (2) Turkish Cypriot capacity to manage natural and cultural resources for economic growth.